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eNews from Sen. Lisa Murkowski - Vol. 2, Issue 1 :: [Visit Senator Murkowski's Web Site](#)
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ASIA TRIP

I traveled to Asia from January 8-15th, visiting Seoul, Tokyo, and Beijing. As the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, this marked my inaugural trip to the region. The purpose of the trip focused on the six-party talks regarding North Korea's nuclear programs, bilateral relations with the United States, regional tensions, and energy cooperation.

My first stop was Korea, where I spent the day in the capital city of Seoul. The highlight was a meeting with President Roh Moo-hyun, where we discussed North Korea, the status of the six-party talks, and how we move forward. That evening our Ambassador to South Korea, Alexander Vershbow, hosted a reception in honor of my visit. I am pleased to report that Alaskan salmon was served. During the reception, I took the opportunity to promote Alaskan seafood products to the business leaders of Korean seafood distributors, visited with Korean buyers of Alaska's coal, and talked with the President of Korean Airlines about the potential for expanded travel between Seoul and Alaska.

In Japan, I spent two days meeting with government officials in Tokyo. Topics discussed included whaling, missile defense, and trade between Alaska and Japan. In addition, I was able to meet with Japan's new Foreign Minister Taro Aso.

In China, I met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, and leaders of the National People's Congress, including the Chairman, Wu Bangguo. During my time in Beijing I became convinced that better relations between the United States and China will come about through more dialogue between leaders of the two nations. I also had the opportunity to address the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing and discuss energy cooperation between China and the United States. It is an understatement to say the potential for technology sharing and investment by American companies in this area is tremendous.



*Senator Murkowski is greeted by South Korean Foreign Minister
Ban Ki-moon during her visit to Seoul*

AGREEMENT REACHED ON PATRIOT ACT

On February 8, I joined a bipartisan group of Senators in announcing an agreement with the White House on the reauthorization of the Patriot Act. The agreement reached makes the Patriot Act a stronger, better piece of legislation. The agreement will for the first time allow an appeal of a Section 215 gag order, it removes the requirement that a recipient of a National Security Letter disclose the name of the attorney they consult or intend to consult, and it ensures that libraries that operate in traditional roles and not as Internet service providers would not be subject to national security letters.

A delicate balance exists between much needed efforts to safeguard our nation from would-be terrorists and protecting the civil liberties Americans have come to expect. It has always been my intention to work to improve the legislation to offer greater protections. I believe we have accomplished that and that we will see a better Patriot Act. I am hopeful the Senate and House will move forward on this agreement in the near future.

FMAP EXTENDED

Language from a bill I originally sponsored was included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which was signed into law by the President on February 8, allowing Alaska to continue to maintain its Medicaid Assistance matching rate. The two year extension of Alaska's FMAP (Federal Medicaid Assistance Program) percentage at 57.58 percent means that the State will receive approximately an additional \$130 million in federal Medicaid funding for FY06 and FY07.

SPRING INTERN JOINS MY D.C. STAFF

Roseann Simko is the first intern selected under my new college intern program. Roseann is currently a junior at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and she was born and raised in Fairbanks and graduated from Lathrop High School in 2002. The college intern program is designed to provide Alaskan college students with the opportunity to work in a legislative environment at the federal level on behalf of the State of Alaska. I believe an internship in Washington allows students a better understanding of how our laws are made and the functioning of the Federal Government. I believe it is important to involve Alaska's future in governmental processes that affect our great State, and I look forward to working with Roseann in the coming months. For more information about this and other internship opportunities in my office visit the [intern](#) section of my website.



Roseann helps answer constituent calls to the D.C. Office.

COFFEE WITH THE SENATOR

If you are planning to visit Washington, D.C., and will be in town on a Thursday, [click here](#) to see if I am hosting a constituent coffee. I enjoy the opportunity to meet with fellow Alaskans and discuss the issues important to them and

their families. The constituent coffee meetings allow you the opportunity to visit with me, take a photo and meet other Alaskans in town.

VIDEO CONFERENCE

I recognize that the cost and time involved to travel to Washington, D.C. to meet with your elected officials can be prohibitive for many Alaskans. For this reason, I have begun installing video conference equipment in my regional offices. This offers another way for constituents to meet with me and share their views. We currently have video conference capability in Anchorage and Juneau, and plan to add equipment to additional offices in the coming months. Contact your regional office for more information.

BLM SEEKS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is calling for nominations to its statewide 15-member advisory council. BLM is seeking qualified individuals to fill positions in the following categories – commercial recreation/tourism, dispersed recreation, elected official, Alaska Native and public-at-large. Call the BLM at (907)271-3335 or visit [their website](#) for more information.



Senator Murkowski meets with President Bush to discuss the Patriot Act and the War in Iraq

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